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# Mississippi Ornithological Society



*Founded in 1955 to promote scientific research and encourage greater appreciation of native birds.*

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Volume 55 Number 2

## NEWSLETTER

August 2010

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### 2010 MOS FALL MEETING

August 13-15

St. Catherine Creek NWR, Natchez, MS

The Fall MOS Meeting will be held in Natchez at the Natchez Grand Hotel. Directions to the hotel: Approach Natchez on Hwy 61 (North or South) and head North to Hwy 555 (Martin Luther King Jr. Street) and then go South (on Hwy 555) into Natchez to Main Street. The Natchez Grand Hotel (Call 601-445-3500 for information.) is located at 111 South Broadway Street across the street from the Natchez Convention Center. A block of 20 rooms for MOS members has been reserved for August 13 and 14. The cost per night is \$86 which includes: A hot full breakfast (They promise to have food available before 7:00 a.m.). An evening wine/cheese reception from 5:00 - 7:00. Guest laundry and fitness center open 24 hours. Unlimited local and long distance telephone calls across the continental U.S.

**REGISTRATION FORM IS ON BACK PAGE.**

#### FRIDAY EVENING – August 13

5:00-5:45 p.m.

Dining Room- Natchez Grand Hotel-Social Hour (Wine and Cheese)

6:00 p.m.

Dinner (Caesar Salad, Cheesy Home-Style Lasagna, Green Beans Almondine, Garlic French Bread, and Chocolate Cake Drizzled with Chocolate Sauce)

6:45-7:15 p.m.

Business Meeting, Field Trip Plans

7:15-8:00 p.m.

Speaker- Bob Schlater of the US National Park Service. Bob heads the staff at St. Catherine Creek NWR.

8:00 p.m.

Board Meeting

#### SATURDAY – August 14

6:45 a.m.

Meet at Natchez Grand Hotel parking lot for field trip.

**Plan to bring your own lunch, snacks, and beverages (refuge does not permit alcoholic beverages).** We will be at the refuge most of the day. **You are on your own for dinner that evening.**

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Meet at Sibley portion of the refuge to view big wadders returning to their roosts in “The Swamp.” **Be sure to bring chairs, bug spray, and plenty of water.**

#### SUNDAY – August 15

6:45 a.m.

Field trips to St. Catherine Creek NWR or Grand Village of the Natchez Indians (which has some fairly short nature trails) – meet at the Natchez Grand Hotel parking lot.

#### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Adrienne Carter

Pard & Stacy Jo Pryor

J.W. & Lydia Willis

Susan Epps

Jake & Allison Walker

**MOS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS**

**PRESIDENT:** Sarajane Smith  
**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Nancy Madden  
**SECRETARY:** Martha Swan  
**TREASURER:** Jan Dubuisson  
**PAST PRESIDENT:** Bill McGehee  
**MISSISSIPPI KITE EDITORS:** Margaret Copeland, Marion Schiefer, and Nick Winstead  
**MOS NEWSLETTER EDITORS:** Gene and Shannon Knight

**MOS ON THE WEB**

[MISSBIRD@olemiss.edu](mailto:MISSBIRD@olemiss.edu)  
[www.msstate.edu/org/mos](http://www.msstate.edu/org/mos)

**ATTENTION ALL MOS MEMBERS**  
**ELECTRONIC MOS NEWSLETTER**

In order to cut down on our printing and mailing costs of the Newsletter, we are asking any of you who would be willing to receive your Newsletter by email to please contact us at: [gsknight@dixie-net.com](mailto:gsknight@dixie-net.com)

Thanks for your help

**President's Corner**

By Sarajane Smith  
MOS President

Dear MOS Members,

Many events have happened since the February meeting in our world of birding. The oil spill has meant many things to many people, but to birders it has been a special grief. Years to come will tell the story of the real effects on bird species and ocean life.

On a positive note, come to Natchez to see the migrating shorebirds at St. Catherine Creek NWR. Yes, it is hot but the birding will make it all worth it. Saturday evening will be a special treat to see the Wood Storks, Roseate Spoonbills, and especially all the egrets returning for their nightly resting place at their rookery.

Thank you for letting me serve as your president. It has been a pleasure and an honor.

Sincerely,  
Sarajane Smith

<b>MOS MEMBERSHIP FORM</b>	
Name _____	
Address _____	
City, State, Zip: _____	
RENEWAL _____	NEW MEMBER _____
<b>DUES:</b>	
___ Individual	\$15 yr.
___ Family	\$25 yr.
___ Student/Senior Citizen	\$10 yr.
___ Subscribing (Libraries)	\$15 yr.
___ Sustaining	\$30 yr.
___ Life	\$300 yr.
<b><u>DUES ARE DUE</u></b>	
And payable in January of each year. Send check to: Jan Dubuisson, 22481 Glad Acres, Pass Christian, MS 39571	

**Submitting Articles For the MOS Newsletter**

The MOS Newsletter is published biannually to inform members of upcoming meetings and birding events. The editors invite you to participate by submitting articles for possible publication in the newsletter. Some suggestions for articles might be:

- \*Birding trips—in-state, out-of-state, or out-of-country
- \* Life bird experiences
- \*Bird locales
- \* Special birding events
- \*Any interesting story about birds or bird behavior

Please submit neatly handwritten or typed articles, not to exceed two single-spaced typed pages. You may contribute as many articles as you would like. Articles may be sent in any time of the year, but if you would like it to appear in a specific issue then it must be sent in on the following deadline dates.

Summer Issue - June 30  
Spring Issue - December 31

Please mail or e-mail your articles to: Gene and Shannon Knight, 79 Hwy 9W, Oxford, MS 38655  
662-236-2413 or [gsknight@dixie-net.com](mailto:gsknight@dixie-net.com)

## **NEWS FROM THE GULF COAST ABOUT THE OIL SPILL FROM THE MOS NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S**

Sitting here trying to write about one of man's greatest debacles of the young 21<sup>st</sup> century is mind boggling. My Army Sergeant used to say "Son, there is no excuse." This statement makes even more sense now. You did what you did for whatever reason-- good or bad. But don't use it as an excuse. And there is NO SENSE to what happened on that 20<sup>th</sup> day of April 2010 some 50 miles out into the Gulf of Mexico. Just simply do what you are supposed to do and take care of business. Go to the limits to make sure all is secure and a major disaster is not around the corner. But NO! This was not the case, so mankind has committed a shameful sin in the Gulf. Did they think about every ocean dwelling animal, every bird, every sea turtle, every square inch of soil, every marsh critter and the humans that thrive on and make a living off what's living in this water... and on and on. This BP miscue has happened right in the middle of breeding season for all that dare raise a family in such a hostile environment. They that make the coast their homes have overcome and thrived after surviving many a hurricane but this will certainly be the last productive season for many coastal species of flora and fauna for years to come. Even if they happen to find another of their species with which to mate, will the pressure of success be too much to endure? Even if they could pull it off in the future years would there be food to pluck from the waters and feed their young? Did any of this ever occur to those that chose to drill for oil in the soup of life? They possibly could have, but after a glass of wine the oil seemed to be the better choice, after all they would be in their offices and away from harms way. Much more could be said on this subject but I choose to more or less let you know what is happening on the MS Gulf Coast as we speak.

Quickly after the oil began to flow freely into the Gulf of Mexico, from the Deep Water Horizon, a drilling rig hired by BP, volunteers from all over wanted to assist in recovering injured/oiled birds and animals. Their hearts were in the right place. This was not to happen without proper training. Nobody would be allowed near the oil without this training. Louisiana felt the impact first and much of the news was indeed from this continent's greatest delta/marsh land.

First a plan had to be developed in what to do with the oil that would come to Mississippi and then what to do with the birds and animals that were oiled. Audubon MS and Volunteer MS have websites to guide these volunteers in how to help or donate to the cause. Getting first-hand information on what was happening on our MS Gulf Coast has been a challenge. Recent conversations with several members of the Mississippi Ornithological Society and Mississippi Coast Audubon Society participating in recovery projects are enlightening but disturbing.

Evidence of oil was almost nonexistent until Hurricane Alex made landfall south the US/Mexican border on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June some 2 months after the explosion on the oil rig. There are booms of several varieties being used to prevent the oil from entering the bays and major bayous. Most of the beach areas and inlets in Jackson County have patchy oil balls with some mats about 5' X 15' with the grass underneath appearing to die immediately. As of now the interior of the marsh seems to be OK. The Harrison County beach crews are scooping tar balls and old oil patties daily. Booms are in place at every port. All ports are closed to any boat traffic and no fishing is allowed. Minimal numbers of birds have been picked up to be cleaned by the authorities. On the barrier islands this info is from a MOS'er working to pick up oiled birds. "There's been so much misinformation and lack of any information for so long. MS was getting hit on the islands for weeks before it made the news for hitting the mainland. There are many oil-soaked birds showing up in MS and the numbers are increasing as more oil comes ashore. Some are alive and some are dead." And this just came across my desk from western Hancock County "Some late news --the shore and marsh at Bayou Caddy is badly hit-- a major clean-up going on."

We want to thank Ned Boyajian, Jake Walker, Nancy Madden, and Nick Winstead for keeping us informed on the oil spill issues on the MS Gulf Coast and especially all the donators, volunteers and workers that are involved in the oil cleanup.

At press time the oil is still flowing freely!!! This is after BP has tried all the tricks in their bag!!!

**BIRDING COSTA RICA**  
**BY**  
**DIANNE PATTERSON**  
**WILDBIRD'S 2009 BIRDER OF THE YEAR**

We arrived in San Jose around midnight on May 26<sup>th</sup>. Amy Hooper, Editor of Wildbird Magazine, and Clay Taylor, Naturalist Markets Manager of Swarovski picked us up at the airport and delivered us to our hotel for a nap. We all meet in the parking lot at 5:30 a.m. the next morning to start our birding adventure. Alex Villegas, our guide, and Raphael Arguedas, our driver, loaded us up and away we went to beat the morning traffic of San Jose. I was so excited to explore a country that I had only read about. I tried to absorb the scenery of the city while keeping my eyes out for birds.

Our destination for the day was Savegre Mountain Lodge in the heart of the Costa Rican cloud forest. We made several stops to view specialty birds of the San Gerardo de Dota area. A photo stop of the active volcano Arenal yielded us Slaty Flowerpiercer, Magnificent Hummingbird, Mountain Elaenia, and Rufous-collared Sparrow. A few more miles and our next stop was a short hike up a rocky mountain road which gave us great looks at Mountain Robin, Volcano Junco, and Highland Wren. What a morning and it was not lunch time yet! While our group loaded up, Alex and Raphael calculated the next stop would be the La Georgina Restaurant. The first bird I saw was a Large-footed Finch hopping out the doorway of the restaurant. What an experience to dine with the birds. Inside the new windows across the back of the restaurant were perfect for viewing the busy hummers feeding and chasing in hummer fashion. The group kept finding birds in the flower gardens and treeline, but my eyes were fixed on the hummingbird action. The Fiery-throated Hummer colors were bright in the light as they perched in the bushes and decorated them as if it were lights on a Christmas tree. Other hummers in the chase were Volcano, Violet-headed, and Scintillants. Savegre Mountain Lodge was everything a birder longs for---beautiful trees, orchards, a flowing river, and comfortable accommodations.

While birding the gardens I found a kiosk with a thought provoking statement, "Do you know who is mainly responsible for preserving our planet?" Open the door and find the answer. It is a mirror with a familiar face looking back at you. Located at their lodge were feeders with lots of busy hummers. The Stripe-tailed and Mountain gems would chase each other in the tall bottlebrush bushes. Other birds of interest were Sulphur-winged Parakeets, Long-tailed Silky-Flycatchers, Black-thighed Grosbeaks, more flycatchers, wrens, woodcreepers, vireos, tanagers, Black-billed and Ruddy-capped Nightingale Thrushes singing their flute like musical serenades. Our last bird to observe as we were leaving the area was the beautiful Resplendent Quetzal. The bird was feeding young in a tree cavity with the young begging to be fed. The bird gave us great looks and plenty of time to study its colors.

I hated to leave the area and all the birds I did not see, but we had another great birding location about 2 hours through the valley and over the mountains. Rancho Naturalista has upstairs and downstairs balconies that will amaze you at the variety of tropical birds coming to the feeders. We enjoyed Gray-headed Chachalacas, Collared Aracaris, Passerine's Tanagers, Golden-hooded and White-lined Tanagers. The Montezuma Oropendolas provided us quite a show with their upside down songs. The hummers coming to the balcony feeders were large, fast and very colorful. The names were as big as the birds such as the Green Thorntails, White-necked Jacobins, Green breasted Mangos, and the showy Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds.

Early the next morning we hiked and birded a trail finding a variety of flycatchers, tanagers, wrens, and a knockout look at the White-collared Manakin. When Alex would find a forest tree with fruit I could not figure out which bird to focus on because there were so many and all different. The lodge also maintains forest hummingbird feeders. We identified Violet-crowned Woodnymph, Green Hermit, the large Violet Sabrewing, Red-footed Plumeteer, and more Green Thorntails. What a show! The big surprise of the hike was seeing 2 Crested Owls as they dozed and would wake up to preen.

After lunch we had checked off so many different hummingbirds, but the Snowcap was avoiding our binoculars. We set out to meet our goal of seeing the Snowcap. After watching the hedgerow of purple porterweed for about 30 minutes out comes a small hummer feeding on every bloom. Clay said "That's our Snowcap." She was small and delicate compared to all the large hummers we had seen earlier. We had so much fun birding and getting great looks at the birds. We did not make our last place to visit, La Paz. Oh well, maybe next time.

Thanks to Wildbird and Swarovski! It was truly a birding experience of a lifetime!

## **Minutes of the MOS Board and Business Meetings February 26-27, 2010**

MOS Spring 2010  
George P. Cossar State Park, Enid Lake

The Board of the Mississippi Ornithological Association met Friday evening, February 26, 2010. Present were Sarajane Smith, President; Nancy Madden, Vice-President, Martha Swan, Secretary; Gene and Shannon Knight, Newsletter Editors, and Margaret Copeland and Marion Schiefer, Co-Editors of the Mississippi Kite (the July 2008 issue had been distributed earlier.) Sarajane thanked Gene Knight for his work on the Mississippi Bird Records Committee and for sending the state checklist to Terry Schiefer to be put on the MOS website.

Plans for the next meeting were discussed. It will be in Natchez area, including the St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Bill McGehee has been working on arrangements and Sarajane will contact him for details. Tentatively, the Friday gathering will be at the Natchez Visitor Center. Saturday evening could include a sack supper taken to the Refuge to watch the birds going to roost. No speaker has been lined up, but it was pointed out that we do not have to have a speaker at every meeting. We will need a slate of new officers to present at this meeting. Nominating Committee members are Frances Henne, Dianne Patterson, and Marion Schiefer.

It was suggested that the Spring 2011 meeting be held on the coast, possibly based at the LaFont Inn again, with a focus on the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Possible dates are March 18-20. Nancy will do some checking and notify the board by email.

For Fall 2011, the Jackson area was agreed on, including the Mississippi Museum of Natural History and the reservoir, in late September/early October.

Margaret suggested that birder-friendly accommodations, including B&B's, be listed on the MOS website. Martha brought up the possibility of MOS making "Birder Calling Cards" available, to alert businesses to the economic value of birding.

President Sarajane Smith dismissed the board meeting.

Following a catfish buffet at the Cossar State Park restaurant on Saturday evening, Sarajane called the business meeting to order. She thanked those who provided food on Friday evening, and those who led the field trips. Dianne Patterson was congratulated for being named by Wildbird's Magazine "Birder of the Year." Among other things, she won a birding trip to Costa Rica and a pair of Swarovski binoculars.

Gene Knight introduced the speakers, Valery E. Smith, Executive Director of Mississippi Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc., Lake Cormorant, MS, and her associate Nancy Fachman. They presented an informative program about their organization and their experiences with injured wildlife of all types, as well as the people who rescue them. This was an exceptionally interesting program because Valery and Nancy brought several "Education Animals" including a Barn Owl, Eastern Screech Owl, Western Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Mississippi Kite, and Speckled King Snake.

Submitted by Martha Swan  
MOS Secretary

**Species List**  
**2010 Winter MEETING**  
**September 25-27**  
**Cossar State Park, Enid Lake**  
**Enid, Grenada, Sardis Lakes**

Canada Goose	Northern Flicker
Wood Duck	Pileated Woodpecker
Gadwall	E. Phoebe
Mallard	Loggerhead Shrike
N. Shoveler	Blue-headed Vireo
Green-winged Teal	Blue Jay
Canvasback	American Crow
Redhead	Fish Crow
Ring-necked Duck	Carolina Chickadee
Lesser Scaup	Tufted Titmouse
Bufflehead	White-breasted Nuthatch
C. Goldeneye	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Hooded Merganser	Brown Creeper
Red-breasted Merganser	Carolina Wren
Ruddy Duck	House Wren
Pied-billed Grebe	Winter Wren
Horned Grebe	Sedge Wren
Eared Grebe	Golden-crowned Kinglet
American White Pelican	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Double-crested Cormorant	Eastern Bluebird
Great Blue Heron	Hermit Thrush
Great Egret	American Robin
Black Vulture	Northern Mockingbird
Turkey Vulture	Brown Thrasher
Bald Eagle	European Starling
N. Harrier	Cedar Waxwing
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Orange-crowned Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Pine Warbler
American Kestrel	Eastern Towhee
Merlin	Chipping Sparrow
A. Coot	Field Sparrow
Killdeer	Le Conte's Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Fox Sparrow
Little Gull	Song Sparrow
Bonaparte's Gull	Swamp Sparrow
Ring-billed gull	White-throated Sparrow
Herring Gull	Dark-eyed Junco
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Northern Cardinal
Forster's Tern	Red-winged Blackbird
Rock Pigeon	E. Meadowlark
Mourning Dove	Rusty Blackbird
Belted Kingfisher	Brewer's Blackbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	Common Grackle
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	House Finch
Red-bellied Woodpecker	A. Goldfinch
Downy Woodpecker	House Sparrow
Hairy Woodpecker	<b>Species Total: 95</b>

MISSISSIPPI ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
FINANCIAL REPORTS  
SEPTEMBER 2009- JANUARY 2010  
SUBMITTED BY JAN DUBUISSON, MOS TREASURER

**INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT**

**INCOME**

Dues	\$145.00
Interest	\$ 56.58
Donations	<u>\$ 95.00</u>

**TOTAL INCOME** **\$296.58**

**EXPENSES**

Newsletter- One Issue	\$127.66
Spring Meeting Expenses	(\$502.15)
Mississippi Kites- Dec 2007	<u>\$364.09</u>

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **(\$10.40)**

**NET PROFIT** **\$306.98**

**BALANCE SHEET**

**ASSETS**

Checking Account	\$3,418.42
Savings Account	\$8,887.52
Certificate of Deposit	\$3,250.78
Coffey Endowment (Restricted)	<u>\$15,000.00</u>

**TOTAL ASSETS** **\$30,556.72**

**NET WORTH** **\$30,556.72**

**MOS AUGUST 2010 MEETING - REGISTRATION FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Person (s):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration	\$5.00 per person	___ Person (s) X	\$5.00 =	\$ _____
Banquet	\$23.00 per person	___ Person (s) X	\$ 23.00 =	\$ _____

Additional contribution to help with publications (\$5.00 per person suggested) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check payable to M.O.S. Mail check and registration form to:**

Jan Dubuisson, MOS Treasurer  
22481 Glad Acres  
Pass Christian, MS 39571

**Mail the registration form to reach Jan no later than July 30.**

**Dues are payable in January of each year. Check mailing label for your dues status.**

**Mississippi Ornithological Society  
79 Hwy 9W  
Oxford, MS 38655**

**Check your expiration date >>>>>>**